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Political Participation in Early Stuart Ireland

Eamon Darcy

Abstract A consideration of political participation in early Stuart Ireland suggests modifications to the prospectus outlined by Peter Lake and Steven Pincus in "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England." By investigating the structures that facilitated public debates about politics in Ireland, as well as the factors that complicated it, this article challenges the periodization of the public sphere offered by Lake and Pincus and suggests that there is a clear need to integrate a transnational perspective. Unlike England, Scotland, and Wales, the majority of Ireland's population was Catholic. The flow of post-Tridentine Catholic ideas from the Continent and Anglo-Britannic political culture meant that competing ideas of what constituted the common good circulated widely in Ireland and led to debates about the nature of authority in the early modern Irish state. These divisions in Irish society created a distinctive kind of politics that created particularly unstable publics. Thus, Ireland's experience of the early modern public sphere differed considerably from concurrent developments in the wider archipelago.

In a seminal article in this journal, Peter Lake and Steven Pincus challenged historians to consider a more "historically grounded" periodization of the public sphere. They offered a chronology that moved from a "Post-Reformation Public Sphere," through a "Transitional Moment" during the civil-war era, toward a coherent "Post-Revolutionary Public Sphere." During the process that they described, political figures and governmental institutions facilitated public debates about political events in what would become a consistent and meaningful way.

Although their work has greatly enriched our understanding of how widening political engagement changed the nature of politics across the early modern period, the fact that Lake and Pincus gave limited consideration to the wider archipelago meant that scholars of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were slower to consider the implications.[1] Ireland, with its limited market for print, has traditionally proven to be particularly problematic for historians of political communication. Recent pioneering work by Raymond Gillespie has suggested that "micro-societies" within Ireland engaged with a burgeoning textual culture that appeared both in manuscript and in print. These groups behaved in similar ways to what Lake and Pincus termed "publics" by circulating information that enabled debate about, and critical engagement with, contemporary politics. Gillespie suggested that this textual culture provided a political vocabulary for participants in the early modern theater

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[1] Peter Lake and Steven Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (April 2006): 270–92, at 279, 280.

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of state communications, which transcended ethno-linguistic divides as Irish literati gradually engaged with prevailing English political ideas. Nonetheless, due to low levels of literacy in English and the financial weakness of the print trade, print was not the primary tool that Irish elites used; thus, state actors sought to engage the opinions of the lower social orders primarily through oral and performative media.[2] Clodagh Tait's work has illustrated how the wider population could, in turn, participate in politics, largely through protest.[3] A key goal of this article, therefore, is to build upon the work of Gillespie and Tait by looking at how those who operated both inside and outside the corridors of power engaged critically with broader political events in Ireland.

Through an examination of linguistic mediation, the logistics of communication, political performance, and confessional publics, this article investigates the means by which the Irish people engaged with politics. Lloyd Bowen has reminded us of the obstacles that complicated political participation in early modern Wales, most notably language difference and the logistics of early modern communication across difficult topographies; these problems can be seen also in Ireland.[4] However, Welsh society was not afflicted by Ireland's deep ethnic and religious divisions, which were further complicated both by influxes of migrants on a scale unprecedented elsewhere in the archipelago and by Ireland's engagement with Catholic networks on the continent. As these divisions generated competing visions of what it meant to be a loyal subject in Ireland, they simultaneously made the achievement of a "relatively unified projection" of a distinctively Irish "common good" extremely difficult.[5] While it is possible to say that the Irish population was more politically engaged in the early modern era than some scholars have hitherto acknowledged, there is little evidence that the nature of public debate underwent significant change, at least before the eighteenth century. If "publics" emerged in the post-Reformation period, they remained episodic, unstable, and ephemeral.

European expatriate, Irish-Catholic networks are of particular importance for understanding political communication in Ireland. They were crucial to the circulation and dissemination of politically influential Irish and Latin language tracts in

[2] Raymond Gillespie, "Negotiating Order in Early Seventeenth-Century Ireland," in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Michael Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge, 2001), 188–205; idem, "Political Ideas and Their Social Contexts in Seventeenth-Century Ireland," in *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*, ed. Jane Ohlmeyer (Cambridge, 2010), 107–30; idem, "Print Culture, 1550–1700," in *The Oxford History of the Irish Book*, vol. 3, *The Irish Book in English, 1550–1800*, ed. Raymond Gillespie and Andrew Hadfield (Oxford, 2006), 3:17–33; idem, *Reading Ireland: Print, Reading and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005); idem, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Making Ireland Modern* (Dublin, 2008).

[3] Clodagh Tait, "Broken Heads and Trampled Hats: Rioting in Limerick in 1599," in *Limerick: History and Society*, ed. Liam Irwin and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh (Dublin, 2009), 91–111; idem, "Riots, Rescues and 'Grene Bowes': Catholics and Protest in Ireland," in *Insular Christianity: Alternative Models of the Church in Britain and Ireland, 1550–1700*, ed. Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin (Manchester, 2012), 67–87; idem, "Disorder and Commotion: Urban Riots and Popular Protest in Ireland, 1570–1640," in *Riotous Assemblies: Rebels, Riots and Revolts in Ireland*, ed. Maura Cronin and William Sheehan (Cork, 2011), 22–49.

[4] Lloyd Bowen, "Information, Language and Political Culture in Early Modern Wales," *Past and Present*, no. 228 (August 2015): 125–58.

[5] Laura A. M. Stewart, "Introduction: Publics and Participation in Early Modern Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 709–30, at 714.

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Ireland, providing an important means of politicizing Irish speakers in a way that is less easy to discern for Wales.[6] Thus, this article will also consider the role of two metropolitan cores—Dublin and London—as well as the early modern Irish Diaspora in Europe. It will argue that the comparative approach to Europe's early modern publics advocated by Lake and Pincus can be refined. The example of Ireland demonstrates the emergence of competing publics oriented around the different cultural, religious, and political agendas that were represented by the Protestant English elite and continental Catholicism respectively. Although bilingual brokers were able to penetrate these boundaries, the circulation of Catholic texts from Europe disseminated oppositional discourses that hindered efforts to create a unified Irish public in the post-Reformation era.

Confessional and ethnic difference in Ireland offers a key point of departure from work on England, Wales, and, to a lesser extent, Scotland. Contemporaries recognized that ethno-religious differences were a problem in Irish politics. In a draft policy document for Elizabeth I composed in the winter of 1601, Sir Francis Bacon expounded upon the best methods to reduce Ireland "to civility and justice, as to obedience and peace." "One of the best medicines," he argued, was "the keeping of Irish persons in terms of contentment." In order to do so, colonial governors were not to adopt "that same partial course … that some have favored the Irish, and some contrary." Thus, both the Irish and English were to be treated "as if they were one nation."[7]

In Ireland, three distinct ethno-religious communities had emerged since the Reformation that exerted varying degrees of influence in political institutions. Ethnicity and religion did not necessarily predetermine one's outlook, but they arguably had a divisive influence on political identities not seen so starkly elsewhere in the archipelago.[8] Over the course of the sixteenth century, Tudor monarchs increasingly turned to English-born or second-generation Protestant settlers, known as the New English, to administer the colony. This irked the Old English, who identified as descendants of the original English invaders of Ireland in the twelfth century and who now remained loyal both to their Catholic faith and to the English monarchy. They resented the promotion of these "base" newcomers, and they argued that they had generations of proof of loyal service to the crown. The New English consequently viewed the Old English as troublesome and ignored their complaints about excessive taxation and the denial of their traditional political privileges. The growing influence of Tridentine reforms prompted the Old English to identify more closely with their Irish-

[6] Bernadette Cunningham, "The Culture and Ideology of Irish Franciscan Historians at Louvain, 1607–1650," in *Ideology and the Historians: Papers Read Before the Irish Conference of Historians, held at Trinity College Dublin*, ed. Iván Berend and Ciaran Brady (Dublin, 1991), 11–30, 20; Thomas O'Connor, "Religious Change, 1550–1800," in Gillespie and Hadfield, eds., *Oxford History of the Irish Book*, 3:169–93, 179–80. See also Lloyd Bowen, "Structuring Particularist Publics: Logistics, Language, and Early Modern Wales," *Journal of British Studies* 56, no. 4 (October 2017): 754–72.

[7] Sir Francis Bacon, "Considerations Touching the Queen's Service," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 16 vols., ed. Basil Montagu (London, 1819), 5:187–196, at 194.

[8] Nicholas Canny, "The Formation of the Irish Mind: Religion, Politics and Gaelic Irish Literature 1580–1750," *Past and Present* 95 (May 1982): 91–116; idem, "Edmund Spenser and the Development of an Anglo-Irish Identity," *Yearbook of English Studies* 13 (1983): 1–19; Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625–42* (Dublin, 2000); Breandán Ó Buachalla, "James Our True King: The Ideology of Irish Royalism in the Seventeenth Century," in *Political Thought in Ireland since the Seventeenth Century*, ed. D. G. Boyce, Robert Eccleshall, and Vincent Geoghegan (London, 1993), 7–35.

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speaking coreligionists, the native Irish. Although recognized as subjects of the English crown since 1541, English commentators still viewed the Irish through a colonial prism.[9] To further complicate matters, the Old English and native Irish shared some cultural and social traits that did not easily fit into neat ethnic categorization, and the boundaries between the two communities were not entirely impenetrable.

Bacon's proposal aimed to bridge these divisions in order to create a unified political community in Ireland, one centered on the English monarchy and based on equal access to "liberties and charters." The influx of Welsh and, more notably, Scottish settlers into Ireland during this time made his task more difficult. The distinct cultures that these communities maintained undermined their identification with either Bacon's "one nation" or James VI and I's concept of "Britishness." In particular, Highland Scottish clans fostered cultural and religious identities that were similar to those of their Irish counterparts, while the Lowland Scots who arrived in Ireland cultivated a religious and ethnic identity distinct from that of both Gaelic-speaking Highlanders and the New English.[10] Some attempt was made during the Jacobean plantations of Ulster to foster a coherent "British" identity among English and Scottish settlers, but this was an "artificial construct" that gained little traction during the first half of the seventeenth century.[11] Thus, a consideration of early modern Irish publics needs to bear in mind that Ireland's ethnic and religious divisions were uniquely complex. A Protestant absentee monarch, a Protestant colonial administration, and a small but powerful English-speaking Protestant elite exerted cultural and political dominance over an increasingly marginalized, Irish-speaking, Catholic population that was itself ethnically divided.

Did English administrators make any efforts to "facilitate" the political inclusion of Catholic groupings? The opening session of the 1613 Irish parliament, the first called in nearly thirty years, presaged much of what was to follow. Catholic MPs found that Protestant MPs from newly created boroughs in Ulster now outnumbered them. The selling of honors in the 1620s under the direction of the king's favorite, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, facilitated the ennoblement of Irish lords. However, Buckingham's belief that Irish titles could also be sold to absentee English (and resident Irish) Protestant opportunists, as a means to enrich royal coffers and strengthen the political influence of the Stuart monarchy, meant that the measure did not greatly enhance the political strength of the native Irish.[12] The controversial policies of Lord Deputy Thomas Wentworth, later earl of Strafford, whose stated was aim to "divide and rule" in Ireland, had the unique distinction of drawing Catholics and Protestants closer together to remove him from his position in 1641, but his plantation policies throughout the 1630s ultimately did more to exacerbate tensions among

[9] Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. Alexandra Bamji, Geert Janssen, and Mary Laven (Farnham, 2013), 33–54.

[10] David Edwards, "Introduction: Union and Separation," in *The Scots in Early Stuart Ireland: Union and Separation in Two Kingdoms,* ed. David Edwards and Simon Egan (Manchester, 2015), 1–28; Rhys Morgan, *The Welsh and the Shaping of Early Modern Ireland, 1558–1641* (Woodbridge, 2014), 107–54.

[11] Raymond Gillespie, "Success and Failure in the Ulster Plantation," in *The Plantation of Ulster: Ideology and Practice*, ed. Éamonn Ó Ciardha and Micheál Ó Siochrú (Manchester, 2014), 98–118, at 103–5.

[12] Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2013), 27–63; Victor Treadwell, *Buckingham and Ireland, 1616–1628: A Study in Anglo-Irish Politics* (Dublin, 1998), 103–47.

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marginalized Catholic elites. During the early decades of the seventeenth century, the traditional elite in Ireland, the Old English, found themselves politically neutered and socially downgraded.[13]

Ireland's ethnic, linguistic, and religious complexity means that the formation of Irish publics cannot be framed in the same way as English publics. Competing political factions within Ireland disseminated political messages that, in evoking the idea of an Irish "commonwealth," held out possibilities for the construction of a political language that diverse groups in Irish society could share.[14] Thus, those who operated outside of the corridors of power were incorporated into "public" debates about politics and would be given opportunities to engage with wider events in a critical way. However, it proved very difficult to overcome deeply entrenched cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisions.

LINGUISTIC MEDIATION

The circulation of news and the maintenance of channels of communication in English between agents of state power and the wider public facilitated a dialogue about politics in early modern England. Any consideration of the circulation of news in early modern Ireland must analyze its transmission, translation, and reception across various speech communities. In Wales, as Bowen has shown, bilingual members of the gentry and clergy acted as "cultural brokers" who circulated news and shaped political participation among the lower social orders. The ability to access news from England, which was then used to disseminate a message of loyalty to the Stuart regime in the Welsh tongue, "helped to condition and shape the early modern Welsh political public" by preventing the association of oppositional discourses in the indigenous language.[15] This posits a key question for early modern Ireland: did bilingual speech communities behave in a similar way? The spread of English rule during this time involved multilingual cultural, political, and social exchanges between natives and newcomers that radically altered language use in early modern Ireland.[16] Despite their obvious presence at these events, those who facilitated these discussions were frequently omitted from the historical record, meaning that any study is fraught with difficulty.[17] This lack of evidence has meant

[13] Clarke, *Old English in Ireland*; Hugh Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland, 1633–41: A Study in Absolutism* (Cambridge, 1989); Michael Perceval Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Dublin, 1994); Terence Ranger, "Strafford in Ireland: A Revaluation," *Past and Present* 19 (April 1961): 26–47.

[14] See, for example, Raymond Gillespie, "Three Tracts on Ireland, c. 1613," *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 38 (2004): 1, 3–47.

[15] Bowen, "Information," 127.

[16] Alan Bliss, "The English Language in Early Modern Ireland," in *A New History of Ireland*, vol. 3, *Early Modern Ireland, 1534–1691*, ed. T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (Oxford, 2009), 546–60; Brian Ó Cuív, "The Irish Language in the Early Modern Period," in Moody, Martin, and Byrne, eds., *New History*, 3:509–45.

[17] Bernadette Cunningham, "Loss and Gain: Attitudes towards the English Language in Early Modern Ireland," in *Reshaping Ireland, 1550–1700: Colonization and Its Consequences*, ed. Brian Mac Cuarta (Dublin, 2011), 163–86, at 171–74; Patricia Palmer, "Interpreters and the Politics of Translation and Traduction in Sixteenth-Century Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies* 33, no. 131 (May 2003): 257–77; Patricia Palmer, *Language and Conquest in Early Modern Ireland: English Renaissance Literature and Elizabethan Imperial Expansion* (Cambridge, 2000).

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that historians can offer only tentative suggestions about the social values invested in bilingualism and about how bilingual mediators shaped the interpretation and reception of news.

A number of factors precipitated the alteration of the linguistic landscape in early modern Ireland. The suppression of the Desmond rebellions (1570, 1579–1583) led to the Munster Plantations, which began a process that brought an estimated 4,000 English settlers to Munster by 1598.[18] Similarly, by 1622 over 12,000 "British" adults had moved onto plantation estates in Ulster.[19] The topography of Ulster also changed quite dramatically at this time, due to the establishment of numerous market towns. Since the sixteenth century, towns across Ireland had been seen as central to the protection and spread of the English language in Ireland. The growth of urban settlements and English plantations exposed far greater numbers of Irish speakers to the English language on a more regular basis. Concurrently, a significant number of Irish-speaking nobles who patronized the Irish arts either left the island or were removed from their landholdings, and this meant that Irish poets had a smaller pool of patrons upon which to call. A new *realpolitik* emerged as the remaining Irish elites engaged with the colonial authorities more frequently in order to maintain their estates. Consequently, Irish literati evoked broader Anglo-Britannic cultures in order to justify the social status of their lords. For example, rather than acclaiming a lord's military prowess, some Irish poets began to praise their lords' ability to negotiate their positions in the colonial order.[20] This process of engagement with broader English politics was replicated in other spheres.

Irish poets, many of whom served as bilingual mediators, did not universally welcome these changes. Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird, an Ulster poet, contrasted the styles of two noble sons; one was commended for maintaining Irish fashions, while the other was excoriated as "a man who follows English ways" (*a fhir ghlacas an ghalldacht*).[21] The encroachment of English rule was blamed for the destruction of Irish culture, which profoundly affected the Irish poetic classes. As Mahon O'Heffernan succinctly put it, "Question! Who will buy a poem?" (*Ceist! Cia do cheannóchadh dán*)?[22] They believed that few Irish lords retained an interest in the complex meters of bardic poetry. This prompted Eochaidh Ó hEoghusa to write poems in simpler Irish for "that earns me greater praise" (*is mó as a moltar sinde*).[23] Thus, classically trained Irish poets, upon whose compositions Irish historians are heavily reliant, portrayed the profound social changes in a negative light

[18] Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (Oxford, 2003), 146.

[19] Ibid., 211.

[20] Marc Caball, *Poets and Politics: Continuity and Reaction in Irish Poetry, 1558–1625* (Cork, 1998), 22; David Greene, *Duanaire Mhéig Uidhir: The Poembook of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir, Lord of Fermanagh, 1566–1589* (Dublin, 1972), Poem 19; Brendan Kane, *The Politics and Culture of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541–1641* (Cambridge, 2010), 68, 70–72; Gillespie, "Political Ideas," 108–11.

[21] Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry: Texts and Translations, Together with an Introductory Lecture* (Oxford, 1974), 49–50, 231–32; Thomas Kinsella, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Irish Verse* (Oxford, 2001), 150–51.

[22] Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry*, 279–80; Darren McGettigan, s.v., "Ó hIgearnáin, Mathghamhain (Mahon O'Heffernan)," *Dictionary of Irish Biography Online* (hereafter *DIBO*), http://dib.cambridge.org/.

[23] Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry*, poem 30; Kinsella, *New Oxford Book of Irish Verse*, 158–59; Marc Caball, s.v., "Ó hEódhusa (O'Hussey), Eochaidh," *DIBO*.

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and criticized the ennoblement of "base" English settlers and "loyal" Irish at the expense of traditional Gaelic elites. The inversion of the social order became the subject of fierce criticism among the Irish poets who noted the increasing need for Irish-language communities to speak English. In a 1620s lament, Brian Mac Giolla Padraig exclaimed, "A trick of this false world has laid me low: / servants in every home with grimy English / but no regard for one of the poet class / save 'Out! and take your precious Gaelic with you!'"[24]

Despite this cultural antagonism, the Irish literati recognized the need to speak English in certain contexts. Consider an event that occurs in the Irish-language lampoon *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* (*The Parliament of the Thomas Clan*), part of which was composed in the 1630s. This satire excoriated Irish "churls" who had climbed the social ladder and now considered themselves fit to govern. An English merchant named Roibín, selling tobacco, interrupts their parliament. Only one person in the assembly, Tomás, could speak English, albeit poorly. While purchasing tobacco, Tomás speaks to Roibín in nonsensical English, although presumably with more comprehensible gestures:

> "Is ta for meeselfe the mony for fart you all my brothers here." Roibín said: "I thanke you, honest Thomas, you shall command all my tobacco." "Begog, I thanke you," said Tomás.

Tomás amazed the rest of the churls in attendance with his apparent linguistic prowess,[25] but the quality of his English was the butt of the joke in this passage, suggesting that Irish-speaking audiences, whom this tract addressed, had sufficient knowledge of English to recognize its humorous quality. This exchange between Tomás and Roibín, despite serving a comedic purpose, reveals how English speakers increasingly infiltrated Irish speech communities and suggests that there was an awareness that the linguistic landscape was changing among social groupings below those of the elite.[26]

Such cultural and social change did not occur in an isolated context. A series of parliamentary initiatives attempted to enforce linguistic change from Irish to English. The 1537 Act for the English Order, Habit, and Language outlined a clear plan to facilitate the spread of the English language in Ireland. All parents were now required to teach their children English, and local Church of Ireland ministers had to maintain English-language schools. This was supplemented by a further act in 1570 insisting that every diocese provide a free school staffed by teachers of English birth and Protestant faith, as happened in Scotland and Wales to convert non-English speakers to Protestantism and English civility.[27] Increasingly, over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, English replaced Latin as the lingua franca of early

[24] "Is cor do leag mé cleas an phlás-tsaoile: / mogh i ngach teach ag fear an smáil-Bhéarla / 's gan scot ag neach le fear den dáimh éigse / ach 'hob amach is beir leat do shár-Gaeilgsa." Seán Ó Tuama and Thomas Kinsella, *An Duanaire, 1600–1900: Poems of the Dispossessed* (Dublin, 2002), 89–91.

[25] N. J. A. Williams, ed., *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* (Dublin, 1981), 97–98.

[26] Aidan Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language: From the Norman Invasion to Independence* (Oxford, 2016), 70–71.

[27] George Meriton, *An Exact abridgment Of all the Publick Printed Irish Statutes Now in Force* … (Dublin, 1700), 518–20; Bowen, "Information," 129–30; Bowen, "Structuring Particularist Publics."

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modern Ireland, prompting more people within the political hierarchy to become bilingual.[28] On a practical political level, the colony needed bilingual people to function effectively. They played a key role in mediating the linguistic divide in early modern Ireland, although the historical record often presented conversations between officials and Irish speakers as having happened in English "with almost baroque fluency."[29] Despite this fact, Patricia Palmer has shown how bilingual people from all ethnic groupings in Ireland, whether native, Old English, or New English, provided interpretative services for their local lords or the Tudor administration. This practice continued into the Stuart era.[30] As evidenced by Tomás's poor English, mentioned earlier, the quality of interpretation could affect communications. Sir John Davies believed that many of the Irish sent their children to English-speaking schools "because they find a great inconvenience in moving their suites by an interpreter."[31] The colonial authorities attempted to address this situation in 1628 and proposed the appointment of Irish-speaking judges, although Charles I's response is not recorded in the matter.[32] Issues of trust affected the politics of translation and shaped the reception of news. Could an interpreter from a different ethnic background be relied upon to give an accurate and complete translation?

Landowners recognized that, in order to administer their estates properly, they needed either to be bilingual or have ready access to interpreters. Matthew de Renzy, an English-speaking merchant from Cologne who came to Ireland in 1606, learned Irish with the Mac Bruaideadha family in order to better manage his Irish landholdings.[33] Some second-generation New English settlers spoke Irish. Richard Boyle, the earl of Cork, hired an Irish-speaking tutor for his son who accompanied the boy to Eton.[34] Irish-speaking gentry also encouraged their children to be bilingual. In 1627, Conell Mageoghegan, who translated the annals of Clonmacnoise into English, reported that many chroniclers "put their children to learn English" so that they could earn a living.[35] Furthermore, large numbers of Irish gentry, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, studied in Lincoln's Inn or Gray's Inn in London. An Calbhach Ó Mórdha, half-brother of Ruaidhrí Óg Ó Mórdha, Irish lord of Laois, entered Gray's Inn in 1567 before returning to Ireland to serve the colonial administration until his death in 1618. During that time, he received grants of land in the

[28] Cunningham, "Loss and Gain," 164–71; Bernadette Cunningham, s.v., "King, Murtagh," *DIBO*. Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, 37.

[29] Patricia Palmer, "Interpreters," 262.

[30] Robert Pentland Mahaffy, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Charles I, 1633–47* (London, 1901), 74; C. W. Russell and John Prendergast, eds., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of James I, 1603–1606* (hereafter *CSPI, 1603–1606*) (London, 1872), 431; Palmer, "Interpreters," 264.

[31] John Davies, *A discouerie of the true causes why Ireland was neuer entirely subdued, nor brought vnder obedience of the crowne of England, vntill the beginning of his Maiesties happie raigne* (London, 1612), 271.

[32] Robert Pentland Mahaffy, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Charles I, 1625–1632* (hereafter *CSPI, 1625–1632*) (London, 1900), 334.

[33] Brian Mac Cuarta, s.v., "De Renzy, Sir Matthew," *DIBO*; idem, "A Planter's Interaction with Gaelic Culture: Sir Matthew De Renzy," *Irish Economic and Social History* 20, no. 1 (June 1993): 1–17.

[34] Nicholas Canny, *The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork, 1566–1643* (Cambridge, 2008); Palmer, "Interpreters," 270; idem, *Language and Conquest*, 77.

[35] Denis Murphy, ed., *The Annals of Clonmacnoise* (Dublin, 1896), 8; Ó Cuív, "Irish Language," 529.

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profitable counties of Dublin and Meath.[36] The estate records of the fourth and fifth earls of Thomond—containing Irish- and English-language deeds from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and showing the presence of Irish Catholic and New English and Dutch Protestant families on their land—indicate a multilingual tenantry. The upbringing of the fifth earl of Thomond, Henry O'Brien, reflected a changing linguistic landscape. Despite being born to an Anglicized Gaelic family, he was educated at Eton and did not speak Irish. He therefore relied upon members of his extended family and the local Gaelic literati to help administer his estate; presumably this reflects the complex linguistic landscape in other Irish estates.[37]

The extensive linguistic transformations that occurred in the seventeenth century prompted Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, a trilingual poet (English, Irish, and Latin), to exclaim: "*Mairg atá gan béarla binn*" (Woe to him without pleasant English).[38] The evidence presented here is tentative and reflects the imprecise nature of the historical record, but it nevertheless indicates that a significant number of bilingual people could operate as mediators between monoglot speech communities. It has recently been postulated that, by 1660, a linguistic "mediator group," comprising one-fifth of the population from the middle rank of the social hierarchy, emerged in Ireland and played a key role in the dissemination of news and administration of the state.[39] The *ad hoc* use of interpreters; the recognition by New English landlords of the importance of the Irish language in maintaining relations with their tenants; and the greater exposure to, and engagement with, the English language by Irish speakers in the seventeenth century all suggest that Ireland had a sizeable bilingual speech community that could engage with both languages with varying degrees of competence. In all probability, this "mediator group" acted as "cultural brokers" who facilitated the engagement of the wider population in Ireland with broader British and European news cultures. A wide range of attitudes toward the increasing use of the English language reflected Ireland's ethnic and religious divisions. This, in turn, had a profound effect on the circulation of news.

THE DISSEMINATION OF NEWS

By the 1620s, the dissemination of news between core and peripheral regions in England facilitated public debates about politics. Scholars are aware that numerous barriers impeded this process in Ireland. Were Irish people well informed about political events, not only in Ireland but also in the wider archipelago?[40] As is well known,

[36] Emmet O'Byrne, s.v., "O'More, Rory," *DIBO*; Jane Ohlmeyer, "Irish Recusant Lawyers during the Reign of Charles I," in *Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s; Essays in Honour of Donal Cregan*, ed. Micheál Ó Siochrú (Dublin, 2001), 63–89, at 66–67.

[37] Luke McInerney, "Documents from the Thomond Papers at Petworth House Archive," *Archivium Hibernicum* 64 (2011): 7–55, at 26–27; Bernadette Cunningham, s.v., "O' Brien, Barnabas (Bryan, Barnaby)," *DIBO*.

[38] John MacErlean, ed., *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair: The Poems of David Ó Bruadair* (London, 1910–1918), 1:17–18.

[39] William Smyth, *Map-Making Landscapes and Memory: A Geography of Colonial and Early Modern Ireland, c. 1530–1750* (Cork, 2006), 408.

[40] Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 112 (August 1986): 60–90, at 73; Lake and Pincus, "Rethinking," 273.

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a significant factor influencing the logistics of communication in Ireland was the under-utilization of the printing press.[41] While newsbooks played a key role in disseminating news and shaping political participation in England, the earliest newspapers from Ireland, where a number of issues have survived, appeared only after 1660.[42] This is not to say, however, that no news publications were printed or circulated in Ireland before this time. During the wars of the three kingdoms, William Bladen acted as the king's printer in Ireland and ran his own commercial enterprise. His printing of a small number of publications relating to events in England and Scotland suggests that a market existed for such news, particularly after the outbreak of war in Scotland.[43] Some members of the upper social echelons were able to access printed news from London, while Irish political rivalries frequently played out in St. Paul's churchyard. A clearer picture of the circulation of English-language printed news in Ireland emerges from looking at Edward, Viscount Conway's network of agents in the 1620s and 1630s. Conway used numerous contacts across the Atlantic Archipelago and Europe to source publications to purchase and store in his Lisnagarvey and London libraries. Sir Théodore de Mayerne sent books and news pamphlets from London, while, on the continent, Kenelm Digby and George Digby scoured the booksellers' shelves.[44] Conway's connections were not unique. James Butler, twelfth earl (later marquis and duke) of Ormond, had similar agents who sent printed news from London. In 1643, Ormond received *Another Extract of Severall Letters from Ireland*, which refuted allegations made against him in *A Letter from The Earl of Warwick*. Apparently, "the Irish part of the citisens" in London now held Ormond in "much assteem" as a result of this "ix peny booke" and considered him their "brother cockney."[45] Baron John Byron, a close associate of Ormond, preferred to send politically opprobrious works. In one instance, Byron sent an unnamed pamphlet and claimed "none but a Scot could write so many scandalous lyes."[46] There is very little evidence, however, about how Irish-speaking communities accessed printed news directly from London. The social structures of bilingualism outlined above, as well as the logistics of communications, would indicate that they were not completely isolated from English-language news, although the work that clearly needs to be done on reception is beyond the scope of this article.

No significant Irish language newspaper appeared until the nineteenth century, although, from the early seventeenth century, religious works published in Irish on

[41] Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*.

[42] Christopher Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland* (Cambridge, 2010), 30–37.

[43] *His Majesties declaration concerning his proceedings with his subjects of Scotland, since the pacification in the camp neere Berwick* (Dublin, 1640); John Corbet, *The Ungirding of the Scottish Armour* (Dublin, 1639); William Laud, *A speech delivered in the Starre-Chamber* (Dublin, 1637); William Lenthall, *Mr. Speaker his speech to His Majestie. In the high court of Parliament the the* [*sic*] *fifth of Novemb. 1640* (Dublin, 1640).

[44] John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1631–3* (London, 1862), 196–97, 209; John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1636–7* (London, 1867), 379; John Bruce and William Douglas Hamilton, eds., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1638–9* (London, 1871), 306, 589.

[45] Thomas Wharton to Ormond, 18 July 1643, Carte MS 6, fol. 108, Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter Bodl); Arthur Trevor to Ormond, 10 December 1643, Carte MS 8, fol. 82, Bodl.

[46] Lord Byron to Ormond, 11 March 1644, Carte MS 14, fol. 247v, Bodl.

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the continent circulated at home and abroad.[47] This underlines the centrality of Irish expatriate communities based on the continent to the shaping of political views in Ireland, as can be measured by hostile commentaries on these publications by English colonial administrators. Allegedly, "seditious" Catholic texts were frequently imported into Ireland. In 1620, Patrick Plunkett was punished for importing Catholic pictures and texts "to season the affections with malignant thoughts of treason and rebellion."[48] Another report, from 29 April 1627, noted how a number of books were imported into Drogheda from the continent that alleged that plans were afoot to anoint the earl of Tyrone as king of Ireland.[49] Similarly in 1642, Henry Jones, dean of Kilmore, and head of the Commission for the Despoiled Subject that collected the 1641 depositions, believed that the importation of "seditious" Catholic texts into Limerick fostered support for a rebellion. Numerous deponents pointed to the importation of Catholic books from the continent, which they believed had mobilized support for, and encouraged participation in, the rebellion.[50] This engagement of Irish Catholics with continental Catholic reform movements, and the hostile suspicion which this raised among colonial authorities, suggests that the interdependence of archipelagic and European networks needs more attention.

Irish port towns acted as nodes through which information from abroad flowed to the inland towns.[51] The heart of early modern Irish (high) political life, and therefore of gossip and news, was Dublin city, where Irish elites could access the latest information from London and spread it to the peripheries. In 1653, Sir Phelim O'Neill, leader of the Ulster forces in the 1641 rebellion and MP for Dungannon, recounted how he regularly met his fellow northern lords and gentry in various houses in Dublin prior to the outbreak of rebellion and received information to carry back to Ulster.[52] One of his co-conspirators, Conor Maguire, claimed that the reading of a news packet in Dublin, which revealed "proclamations against the Catholics in England," raised "great fear of suppressing of religion."[53] In 1613, David Rothe, the Catholic vicar apostolic of Ossory, had explained that MPs who returned from Dublin were supposed to operate as political mediators and disseminators of news to "the counties and corporations whose voice and suffrage we were entrusted withal."[54]

Such news could be disseminated by both oral and scribal means. Letter writers frequently drew clear distinctions between "private" and "public" news, suggesting that these may have been read aloud to, or circulated among, other audiences. Evidence from the papers of Richard Boyle, the first earl of Cork, is particularly rich

[47] O'Connor, "Religious Change," 179–80; Cunningham, "Culture and Ideology," 20.

[48] Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter HMC), *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont,* vol. 1, pt. 1 (London, 1905), 58.

[49] *CSPI, 1625–32*, 227.

[50] Deposition of Henry Jones, 3 March 1642, MS 809, fols. 1–4v, fol. 1, Trinity College, Dublin (hereafter TCD); deposition of John Crooke and Richard Sergier, 10 March 1642, MS 809, fol. 266, TCD.

[51] Lake and Pincus, "Rethinking," 290.

[52] Examination of Sir Phelim O'Neill, 23 Febrary 1653, MS 836, fols. 167–70v, TCD.

[53] J. T. Gilbert, ed., *A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland*, 3 vols. (Dublin, 1879), vol. 1, pt. 2:503.

[54] Gillespie, *Seventeenth Century Ireland*, 59; HMC, *Report on Franciscan Manuscripts Preserved at the Convent, Merchant's Quay, Dublin* (Dublin, 1906), 65–67; Thomas O'Connor, s.v., "Rothe, David," *DIBO.*

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in this regard and may prove indicative of a wider trend. In 1607, Sir Geoffrey Fenton wrote from Dublin to his Cork-based son-in-law, Boyle: "This is for your privatt [use] only, and for the publicke, I haue no more to write, then my form[e]r l[ette]res do raveel."[55] In 1618, William Jones, a chief justice based in Cork, complained to Boyle (then in Dublin), "My good lord these partes affoorde nothyng worth the writing, of late we haue had no passages from England; Manie men are here laboring for letters on your behalf."[56] In 1639, several agents went to Dublin Castle in order to hear the latest news from England, as sent by the English Privy Council. They then related this news to their lords.[57]

Regular post between London, Dublin, and the major towns facilitated communications, but there is a dearth of evidence about the nature of inland and maritime communications in Ireland. R. A. Butlin and John McGurk argued that English officials tended to exaggerate the difficulties that they faced disseminating information and traveling around the Irish countryside.[58] A map of Ireland's roads that Cromwellian cartographers compiled in 1657 illustrates a well-connected road network, although there is no indication of travel times.[59] Problems of terrain, banditry, and weather hindered communication and, to make matters worse, the Tudor, Stuart, and Cromwellian authorities often suspected the postmasters of corruption. In 1658, one of the Cromwellian postmasters in Dublin opened the mail of prominent figures and took other letters home, thereby depriving the intended recipients of their mail.[60] Furthermore, the amount of time that it took for letters to reach their destinations varied. In August 1616, a letter from Dublin reached the earl of Cork at Youghal after twenty-seven days. Conditions were evidently more favorable when, a year later, the same journey took only five days, probably the standard amount of time.[61] Continental news, meanwhile, was not only closely monitored and occasionally censored by colonial authorities, but it also could be interrupted on its journey to Ireland by pirates.[62] Thus, the circulation of news via letters was subject to considerable interference, while its reliability fluctuated in terms of both accuracy and delivery.

Beyond the realm of textual evidence, the more nebulous world of oral transmission entailed mobile social groups facilitating the circulation of news in Ireland. Hostile English commentators believed that Irish travelling entertainers were

[55] Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Richard Boyle, 31 October 1607, MS 13,236/3, National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI).

[56] William Jones to Richard Boyle, 15 April 1618, MS 43,266/8, NLI.

[57] Joshua Boyle daybook, 3 June 1639, MS 13,237/23, NLI.

[58] R. A. Butlin, "Land and People, c. 1600" in Moody, Martin, and Byrne, eds., *New History*, 141–67, at 141; John McGurk, "Terrain and Conquest, 1600–1603," in *Conquest and Resistance: War in Seventeenth Century Ireland*, ed. Pádraig Lenihan (Leiden, 2001), 87–114, at 87.

[59] Butlin, "Land and People," 162; The Down Survey of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php, accessed 29 May 2017.

[60] Robert Dunlop, *Ireland under the Commonwealth*, 2 vols. (Manchester, 1913), 1:559; "Documents relating to the Management of the Postal Service in Ireland, 7 Jan 1662," in Robert Pentland Mahaffy, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of Charles II, 1660–2* (London, 1905), 682–84.

[61] John Beare to Richard Boyle, 7 August 1616, MS 13,236/7, NLI; Robert Jacob to Richard Boyle, 2 August 1617, MS 13,236/10, NLI.

[62] HMC, *Egmont*, 56–57; HMC, *Report on Franciscan Manuscripts*, 80–82.

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"common carryers of newes" who fostered anti-English sentiment.[63] These troupes were quite common in late medieval and early modern Ireland, and they could move comfortably between English and Irish circles.[64] Their cosmopolitan nature, according to Alan J. Fletcher, was borne out by evidence of their "different ethnic traditions," and they may have further facilitated the bilingual communication of news to wider Irish audiences.[65] Towns were also central to oral communication, as the journey of Sir James Gough to disseminate a direct message from James VI and I to Ireland's Catholics suggests. Gough left London and sailed to Dungarvan in County Waterford. There he met the sovereign of Dungarvan and the constable of Youghal, who presumably disseminated this message throughout the province of Munster. Gough visited other towns to repeat this process on his way back from the southwest coast to Dublin.[66] Although King James later complained that the meaning of his words had been unfaithfully represented, Gough's actions provide further evidence of the practicalities of political communication by oral means.[67] Consider also the dilemma that Sir Philip Perceval faced when his kinsman reported news from London: "As for news, there are so many and different reports of our parliamentary proceedings that I cannot deliver you any certainty of anything."[68] The relation of news was subject to the vagaries of interpretation, memory, and performance. Therefore, contemporaries had to employ their critical faculties when assessing its credibility.

The ephemeral nature of the spoken word means that evidence is quite scarce, but some English-language songs from the 1640s survive. After the outbreak of rebellion in 1641, the rebel movement formed a government, the Confederate Catholics of Ireland, and established Kilkenny as their base. Over time, the Confederates became beset with internal divisions. A collection of songs now housed in the Beinecke Library at Yale University illustrates how this medium both served to inform the wider public about political events and provided opportunities for critical political engagement.[69] Furthermore, Irish poetry, which was commonly performed publicly, may also have shaped political views for Irish-speaking communities. One of the better-known examples is the Book of the O'Conor Don, a collection of 341 poems compiled for Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, a relation of Randal MacDonnell, the earl of Antrim, whose world incorporated east Ulster, the Scottish Highlands, and the Continent. A full discussion of the poems is not necessary here, but it is important to note that these verses were performed before members

[63] John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande …* (London, 1573), ffii–ffiii, woodcut 3, gloss D; Alexander Grosart, ed., *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser*, 10 vols. (London, 1882), 9:121.

[64] Alan Fletcher, ed., *Drama and the Performing Arts in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland: A Repertory of Sources and Documents from the Earliest Times until c. 1642* (London, 2001), 461–67; idem, *Drama, Performance and Polity in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Toronto, 2000), 36–37, 210–13.

[65] Fletcher, *Drama, Performance and Polity*, 213.

[66] "Sir James Goughe his recantation," 31 January 1614, MS 567, fols. 28v–30, at fol. 28v, TCD.

[67] C. W. Russell and John P. Prendergast, eds., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland of the Reign of James I, 1611–4* (London, 1877), 462–63.

[68] HMC, *Egmont*, 125–26.

[69] Ibid., 310–11; Verses concerning the first duke of Ormond, Osborn MS fb 228, Beinecke Library, Yale University; Andrew Carpenter, ed., *Verse in English from Tudor and Stuart Ireland* (Cork, 2003), 228, 266, 268, 273; HMC, *Fourteenth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: Appendix Part 8* (London, 1895), 105–18.

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of the Irish-language and expatriate community serving in the Spanish army in Flanders. Many later returned to Ireland to fight in the wars of the 1640s. Some of the poems in the collection portrayed Mac Domhnaill's regiment as Ireland's deliverers from the yoke of Protestant oppression.[70] Another composition that circulated in Flanders, "*Dursan do chás, a chríoch Bhreagh*" or "Hard is thy case, O Land of Breagha," praised Owen Roe O'Neill, then a commander of a Spanish *tercio* but later general of the Ulster forces in the Confederate army. The verse reminded O'Neill that "the pious just judge is the Pope," whose authority superseded all secular powers. It criticized those in Ireland who betrayed the church: "if that crew be Patrick's children then the Pope and the holy clergy have been deceived."[71] If this verse was repeated among Owen Roe's soldiers in Ireland during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, then that fact may partly explain why his forces were more inclined to support the clerical party in the Confederation.

These examples suggest that news circulating around Ireland along channels of oral and literate communication could be transmitted through the lower social orders with the help of bilingual mediators. Key problems relating to translation, transmission, and reception still remain, however, as Ireland operated on the periphery of English politics and as its integration into English news cultures was beset by logistical problems that impeded full assimilation. Furthermore, increasing numbers of expatriate Irish Catholics circulated news from the continent that promoted other authorities as the supreme head of the Irish polity. Distance and limited communication between the two kingdoms allowed for the circulation of a series of oppositional discourses that underpinned the emergence of multiple publics. They intensified the public political debates that polarized Irish society along sectarian lines and significantly influenced the way in which different communities interpreted news.

POLITICAL PERFORMANCE

Actors both within and outside the corridors of power appealed to the wider public for support.[72] Prompted by the episodic outbreak of religious and political controversies, actors in the theater of state sought to secure support by deploying a range of media. How did these interactions facilitate the emergence of a public, or publics, in early modern Ireland?

In an English context, both James VI and I and Charles I were intimately aware of what John Walter has termed "the weakness of the state's repressive force." This necessitated a sustained promotion of their authority among the wider English public through non-violent means.[73] Lake and Pincus have noted James VI and I's

[70] Ruairí Ó hUiginn, "Irish Literature in Spanish Flanders," in *The Ulster Earls and Baroque Europe: Refashioning Irish Identities, 1600–1800*, ed. Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (Dublin, 2010), 349–361, at 355, 361.

[71] Lambert Mac Kenna, "Some Irish Bardic Poems XCI: Appeal to Owen Roe O'Neill as Defender of the Catholic Faith," *Studies; an Irish Quarterly Review* 38, no. 151 (September 1949): 338–44.

[72] Lake and Pincus, "Rethinking," 274.

[73] Michael Braddick and John Walter, "Introduction: Grids of Power; Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Early Modern Society," in Braddick and Walter, eds., *Negotiating Power*, 1–42; John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2006), 9–10.

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skillful ability to partake in this "communicative political game" in England.[74] Perhaps the most convenient way to initiate a conversation with the wider Irish public was through the use of proclamations. Proclamations were a remarkably successful means of spreading information and became a crucial medium of political communication in a society composed of people whose literacy skills varied greatly.[75] On 11 March 1605, Sir Arthur Chichester, the lord deputy, issued a proclamation on the king's behalf that declared measures intended to break longstanding feudal ties between the Gaelic Irish and their lords and to bind their loyalty to the new Stuart monarch. The text of this proclamation, no doubt, had some appeal: Irish vassals held no "certain estate, nor certain place of habitation," nor did they pay regular rents, being subjected to "an uncertain cutting or exaction" upon their lords' whim. Thus, the lower social orders had no incentive to "build houses nor manure the earth, nor provide for their children nor posterities in such sort as they would do if they might enjoy their said lands during a certain term, and for certain duties payable for the same." Such practices were "barbarous, unreasonable, and intolerable in any civil or Christian commonwealth." Now, all

> poor and inferior sort of subjects, as shall from time to time be grieved or burdened with any oppression, exaction, or other insolence of any of the said great lords or gentlemen … that they eftsoons make their complaint either to the Justices of Assize … or … the Governor of the country or sheriff of the county.[76]

The proclamation was disseminated in English, Latin, and Irish, so that, in Chichester's words, "it may generally be understood."[77] Reflecting upon the impact of the proclamation on Antrim locals, Thomas Phillips wrote, "This had bred such an impression in them, that they will not now endure any more wrongs of their chieftains, but they immediately seek for redress … and follow his Majesty's officers, to crave justice against their Lords."[78] Phillips's words need to be taken with a grain of salt; the intent of this proclamation was repeated during the reign of Charles I. Furthermore, one must bear in mind caveats concerning linguistic mediation.[79] Regardless, the insistence that Irish speakers use English Common Law Courts led to the influx of English legal terms into the Irish language, again showing a broader engagement with prevailing Anglo-Britannic discourses.[80]

Various state actors attempted to communicate with the wider population in order to promote their policies. One of the key moments in the first years of Charles I's reign was the failure of the Cadiz expedition in 1625, which led to attempts to impeach Buckingham. With the king in desperate need of funds to secure the

[74] Lake and Pincus, "Rethinking," 278.

[75] Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, 107; James Kelly, "Political Publishing, 1550–1700," in Gillespie and Hadfield, eds., *Oxford History of the Irish Book*, 3:194–214; Bowen, "Information," 142–43.

[76] Constantia Maxwell, ed., *Irish History from Contemporary Sources, 1509–1610* (London, 1923), 208–10.

[77] *CSPI, 1603–6*, 266–67.

[78] Ibid., 266, 275–76; Robert Steele, ed., *Tudor and Stuart Proclamations 1485–1714: Scotland and Ireland* (Oxford, 1910), no. 180.

[79] Steele, *Tudor and Stuart Proclamations*, no. 267.

[80] Seán Ó Conaill, "Tuireamh na hÉireann," in *Five Seventeenth-Century Political Poems*, ed. Cecile O'Rahily (Dublin, 1952), 73–74; Doyle, *History*, 77–78.

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defense of Ireland and England, the Old English saw an opportunity to display their loyalty to Charles I in return for political concessions. One of the leading negotiators, Sir John Bathe, advocated "reciprocal correspondence with the king and his subjects" and thereby made a pointed criticism of the exclusionary tactics of the colonial authorities.[81] The intricacies of these negotiations with the Old English have been discussed elsewhere, but the attempts to sell what became known as the Graces to the wider public have received little attention.[82] The negotiations surrounding the Graces offered an opportunity for a cross-denominational alliance. The Church of Ireland hierarchy, however, vehemently opposed any suggestion of Catholic toleration. A series of sermons that a number of bishops and archbishops delivered in April 1627 denounced the move by Charles I. On 30 April 1627, the Church of Ireland archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher, attempting to find a solution to this political fissure, delivered a sermon imploring his audience to assist in a cross-denominational funding of the army. Ussher was at pains to point out that the Old English could be trusted. He distinguished them from radicalized Catholics who subscribed to "a madd & venomous doctrine & hellish opinion."[83] He attempted to drive a wedge between converging Catholic identities in Ireland and exploited age-old ethnic distrust between the native Irish and Old English. While Ussher accommodated the Old English into his political vision, he did not extend this accommodation to include all Irish Catholics, particularly the landless classes, and he sought a settlement that favored the Church of Ireland.[84] Similarly, opposition to the Graces also emerged among Irish Catholics, although the evidence that details this opposition is circumstantial. At this time, rumors circulated that Catholics prayed openly for "Phillipum regem nostrum" (Our King Philip) at Mass in the midlands. Here the pulpit acted as an important communicative platform as did the rumors that circulated this information around Dublin.[85]

In response, some within the Catholic hierarchy must have recognized a need to promote their policy of accommodation with the English monarch. If they sought to promote loyalty to the Stuart dynasty through their sermons, then evidence has not yet emerged. What has survived, however, is a song that appeared in print during the summer of 1626, entitled "Mont Taragh's Triumph." The publication of this ballad could only have resulted from the cooperation of the colonial authorities and lay-Catholic elites pushing for the negotiation of the Graces, as it was printed at Dublin, presumably by the press controlled by the London Stationers' Company, although there is no official endorsement on the surviving copy.[86] In describing a "rising out" on the Hill of Tara, the symbolic seat of the ancient Irish high kings, the ballad appropriated Gaelic symbols of national identity and authority to engage with prevailing English political culture: "To stand with renowne, for

[81] Clarke, *Old English in Ireland*, 30–31.

[82] Ibid., 44–59; Gillespie, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland*, 74–82.

[83] Speech of Dr Ussher before the Lord Deputy, BL Add. MSS 72414, fols. 90–94; Alan Ford, "James Ussher and the Creation of an Irish Protestant Identity," in *British Conciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1998), 185–212, at 205.

[84] Alan Ford, *James Ussher: Theology, History and Politics in Early-Modern Ireland and England* (Oxford, 2007), 147–150; Treadwell, *Buckingham and Ireland*, 281.

[85] *CSPI, 1625–32*, 15; TNA, SP 63/214, The examination of James Nangle, 2 April 1625, fol. 97.

[86] Broadside Ballads Online, Bodleian Library, http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/search/roud/V1305; Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, 58–59.

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Charles and his crowne, is your onely delight and desire."[87] This song reflects part of the wider agenda pursued vigorously by the Catholic Church hierarchy in Ireland, most notably David Rothe and Peter Lombard, that sought to reach an accommodation with the Stuart monarchy. In his 1604 tract, *Episcopion Doron*, Lombard, archbishop of Armagh, congratulated James VI and I on his succession to the English throne while lobbying for the amelioration of the policies affecting Irish Catholics. Throughout the early seventeenth century, Lombard had used his influence at Rome to secure the appointment of Catholic bishops who would not be seen as subversive by the colonial authorities.[88]

As is well known, Charles I concluded an agreement with the Old English in 1628, but despite receiving significant sums of money, the Irish parliament never enacted the Graces. Nonetheless, this episode reveals how the rich tapestry of political communication and information exchange that existed in early modern Ireland could be used to mobilize communities to support particular political initiatives.

Further evidence of this can be found in the fraught politics of the 1640s. The Irish Confederation could not agree to a post-war settlement as its members were divided about the position of the Catholic Church and the redrawing of Catholic landholdings in any settlement with the English monarchy. On the one hand, the peace party sought a speedy end to the wars of the 1640s, a restoration of lay Catholic lands, and the private toleration of the Catholic faith. On the other hand, the objectives of the clerical faction were very different. They wished for a stronger settlement for the Catholic Church, one that allowed it to hold on to properties regained during the 1640s, and the complete repeal of penal legislation.

Matters came to a head over the agreement of the first Ormond Peace, which offered a speedy end to the war in return for 10,000 Irish troops to be sent into England and the removal of the Oath of Supremacy and all penal legislation enacted after 7 August 1641.[89] Ormond, as Charles's most senior royalist officer in Ireland, privately offered assurances that Catholics would be allowed to practice their faith behind closed doors, but he was reluctant to publish details of this, knowing that it would antagonize the king's enemies in England as well as Irish Protestants. The clerical party rejected these proposals, and they rallied their supporters through sermons, verse, and public meetings to reject the Peace.[90] In several towns, a lack of cooperation from officials and the refusal of citizens to appear prevented the herald who issued the Peace from doing so. Tensions escalated in Limerick, where the herald was physically assaulted, and the mayor stripped of his ceremonial robes and staff. An angry crowd had sent a clear message to Ormond and the Confederate hierarchy that the Peace did not meet their desires. Ormond tried one final desperate throw of the dice, a procession in Kilkenny, where the

[87] "Mount Taraghs Triumph, 5 July 1626," in Carpenter, ed., *Verse*,183–85.

[88] Patrick Corish, *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dublin, 1981), 18–42; H. F. Kearney, "Ecclesiastical Politics and the Counter Reformation in Ireland, 1618–1648," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11, no. 2 (October 1960), 202–12; Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, s.v., "Lombard, Peter," *DIBO*; idem, *Catholic Reformation in Ireland: The Mission of Rinuccini, 1645–1649* (Oxford, 2002), 39–81.

[89] *The Last Articles of Peace Made, Concluded, Accorded And Agreed upon the 30 day of July, 1646* (London, 1646), 2–3.

[90] See, for example, J. T. Gilbert, ed., *History of the Irish Confederation and War in Ireland, 1641–9*, 7 vols. (Dublin, 1882–91), 6:110; and Michael Hartnett, *Haicéad* (Oldcastle, 1993), 61–66.

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text of the Ormond Peace probably formed part of the civic parade into the city.[91] The entire spectacle was an attempt to promote the Peace and to discourage any opposition among Irish Catholics.[92] Yet Ormond's strategy failed. Several days later, after the Peace had been abandoned, supporters of the clerical faction in Kilkenny held their own civic procession to honor the visit of the papal nuncio, Giovanni Battista Rinuccini. For this purpose, they used the same "triumphal arches, verses, mottoes, addresses and public compositions" from Ormond's procession of the Peace and turned them into "acclamations in favour of the renunciation of it."[93] The rejection of the Ormond Peace is, perhaps, our best example of how state agents promoted their politics to the wider public and how, in this instance, they found their policies roundly rejected.

While the urban context of political performance is well-understood, political participation in rural areas is also important to comprehend. Under the terms of Brehon law, local assemblies were supposed to happen on a yearly basis to settle legal disputes and to host political debates. These meetings were held, significantly, on the inauguration hills of local lords. It is difficult to determine who attended these gatherings, but it is likely that all freeholders in the locality were expected to appear. The symbolic importance of these sites in the Irish countryside is reflected in the fact that the Irish rebel leadership in 1641 used them to enlist wider support for their rebellion. According to Sir Phelim O'Neill, in the beginning of the rebellion, a series of meetings occurred between lords and gentry on the border between Ulster and the Pale. Local leaders and military commanders were appointed. Undoubtedly the most important of these meetings was held at the hill of Tara where, throughout the seventeenth century, local gentry were supposed to appear in arms before the chief governor to demonstrate their capability to act in defense of the colony.[94] Here we see how the rebel leaders were drawing upon both English and Irish cultures of power in order to legitimize their actions.[95]

These assemblies operated as a means of facilitating political debates and of disseminating information. In one instance, outside Mullingar town in early 1642, a gathering of 400 to 500 people was informed of events at the siege of Drogheda in order to mobilize locals to join the rebellion. The response of those present was one of overwhelming support. A witness recalled how "the whole assembly cryed out that they shold haue aide & that euerie one would goe in person rather then faile."[96] At another meeting, held outside Wexford, it was alleged that one James Bryan had a bag filled with "two thousand billets and libells" that urged

[91] Alan Fletcher, "Select Document: Ormond's Civic Entry into Kilkenny, 29/31 August 1646," *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 139 (May 2007): 365–79, at 376n2.

[92] Ibid., 370.

[93] "My Irish Campaign," *Catholic Bulletin* 9, no. 2 (February 1919): 66.

[94] Examination of Sir Phelim O'Neill, 23 February 1653, MS 836, fols. 167–70v, TCD; Examination of Edward Dowdall, 13 March 1642, MS 816, fols. 44–52v, TCD; Examination of John Smith, 29 June 1642, MS 817, fols. 68–70, TCD.

[95] Bríd McGrath, "Mount Taragh's Triumph: Commitment and Organization in the Early Stages of the 1641 Rebellion in Meath," in *The 1641 Depositions and the Irish Rebellion*, ed. Eamon Darcy, Annaleigh Margey, and Elaine Murphy (London, 2012), 51–64, at 54–55; Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), 33–34.

[96] Examination of John Smith, 29 June 1642, MS 817, fol. 70, TCD.

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contemporaries to "lay our heads together and march together."[97] Upon the approach of Charles Coote, a commander of colonial forces, near Mullingar, the local rebel leader, Luke Fitzgerald, convened a meeting of the Catholic inhabitants to warn them of impending military action against them. When no such event occurred, many in the locality complained "that Luke had abused them," but "others said noe, his message shewed his care of them."[98] These meetings were not simply exercises in the manipulation of public opinion; they also provided the opportunity for the wider population to discuss the conduct of the war and the funding of the Confederation with local leaders.

These political performances and interactions illustrate how a wider public became aware of national and archipelagic issues. They suggest that contemporaries were aware of the need to secure the support of a broad section of the population. Although these conversations happened only episodically, even in the 1640s, they were a recognized, albeit irregular, part of the Irish political process. It is striking, nonetheless, that Confederate politics does not appear to have generated change in the nature or operation of Irish publics. Crucially, print did not emerge as the key medium for conveying political ideas to the wider population. This investigation of Irish linguistic mediation, the dissemination of news, and political performance shows how oppositional factions in civil-war Ireland were able to draw upon different discourses to appeal to wider publics. Perceptions of what constituted the common good were hotly contested in the first half of the seventeenth century. Thus, the Confederate era intensified an existing process of polarization and crystallization of rival political factions, a key issue that affected the formation of Irish publics.

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Political communication in early modern Ireland was vibrant. Communication between urban spaces was regular, although it took time for news to travel, while the penetration of news into rural areas was more sporadic, suggesting that some areas were not fully integrated into news networks. Examining the transmission, translation, and reception of political news reveals that well-defined rival publics existed in Ireland, but confessional allegiances were a complicating factor; different religious institutions in Ireland articulated competing versions of what constituted the public good.

In both England and Wales, the Established Church played an important role in shaping expectations about political participation. While the Church of Ireland supported royal authority, its attitude toward Irish speech communities was ambiguous throughout the early seventeenth century. A number of individuals within the church hierarchy promoted the use of Irish, most notably William Bedell, bishop of Kilmore. Overall, however, the Church of Ireland's enthusiasm for encouraging the conduct of services in Irish was lukewarm, and it failed to create a coherent Irish-speaking Protestant public.[99] A small number of Irish-language catechisms and prayer books, and a translation of the New Testament texts, appeared in the

[97] Examination of Peter Hooper, 27 January 1654, MS 819, fol. 33, TCD.

[98] Eamon Darcy, *The Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* (Woodbridge, 2013), 59; Deposition of William Baker, 25 July 1642, MS 817, fols. 65–67, TCD.

[99] John MacCafferty, *The Reconstruction of the Church of Ireland: Bishop Bramhall and the Laudian Reforms, 1633–1641* (Cambridge, 2007), 17.

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late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the Church of Ireland as an institution was strongly committed to promoting the English language. Officially, the church hierarchy acknowledged in 1615 that it needed to provide materials in Irish, but it was not until the 1680s that both the Old and New Testaments became available in Irish translation; to put this in perspective, by 1663, John Eliot had translated the entire Bible into the language of Massachusetts Native Americans.[100] Despite Bedell's enthusiasm for proselytizing through the Irish language, his catechism, *The ABC or the Institution of a Christian*, which consisted of parallel Irish and English texts, did not try to fashion a link between the Protestant faith and Irish identity, as happened in Scotland and Wales.[101] Protestant clerics, such as James Ussher, attempted to fashion an identity that could appeal to all regardless of ethnicity or faith, but a key stumbling block was the absence of a common "origin myth" that could accommodate the many ethnicities in Ireland.[102] This would have a telling impact in the early stages of the 1641 rebellion.

Catholic apologists produced a plethora of publications in Irish and Latin that fashioned an Irish-speaking Catholic identity centered on concepts of *náisiun*, *creideamh agus athartha*, and *Éireannaigh*—"nation," "faith and fatherland," and "Irish." Some of these publications explicitly linked these concepts to the Stuart monarchy. Rather than using the terminology of "Gael" (Irish born) or "Gall" (foreigner, or Old English), the term *Éireannaigh* (Irish) came to describe all Catholic inhabitants of the island, regardless of ethnicity or birth.[103] Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (*A Compendium of Knowledge of Ireland*) is perhaps the best-known expression of this new identity. Keating appropriated Gaelic symbols of authority to portray the ideal administration of politics, arguing that a long tradition of inclusive and representative government existed in Ireland prior to the arrival of the English in the twelfth century, thereby offering a pointed critique of English government in Ireland since the failure of the Graces. While Keating's history criticized Stuart governance in Ireland, it did not seek to subvert it; he was part of a cultural milieu that sought to negotiate a position for Irish Catholics within Stuart imperial politics.[104] Since the accession of James VI and I, a number of Irish poets attempted to portray the Stuart monarchy as beneficial to Gaelic Ireland. Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird's "Trí Coróna I gcairt Shéamais" ("Three Crowns in James's Charter") has been lauded as a poem celebrating the succession of the Stuart monarchy and has

[100] *Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops and the rest of the Cleargie of Ireland* (Dublin, 1615); *Tiomna Nuadh* (Dublin, 1603); *Leabhar na nVrnaightheadh gComhchoidchiond* (Dublin, 1608); *Leabhuir na Seintiomna* (London, 1685); *An Biobla Naomhtha* (London, 1690); John Eliot, *Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God* (Cambridge, 1663).

[101] William Bedell, *The ABC or the Institution of a Christian* (Dublin, 1631); MacCafferty, *Reconstruction*, 101–2; Bowen, "Structuring Particularist Publics"; Jane Dawson, "Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd in Scotland," in *Calvinism in Europe, 1540–1620*, ed. Andrew Pettegree, Alastair Duke, and Gillian Lewes (Cambridge, 1996), 231–53.

[102] Ford, "James Ussher," 204–5.

[103] Caball, *Poets and Politics*, 40–82; Mícheál Mac Craith, "'Beathaíonn na Bráithre na Briathra': The Louvain Achievement," *Cumman Seanchais Ard Mhacha* 21, no. 1 (2007/8), 86–123, at 108.

[104] John O'Mahony, ed., *The History of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the English Invasion by the Reverend Geoffrey Keating* (New York, 1857), 282, 567–58; Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating: History, Myth and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), 141–45; Gillespie, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland*, 83–86.

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been offered as evidence of a willingness among Irish poets to promote the legitimacy of the Stuarts as rulers of Ireland. In "Trí Coróna i gcairt Shéamais," Mac an Bhaird praised the succession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England, for he had linked "black earthed Alba's crown" with the "Saxons' crown" and "Éire's wondrous crown."[105] Continentally trained Irish clergymen echoed these sentiments in Europe. Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil's work on the sacrament of penance, *Scáthán Shacramunite na hAithridhe*, published in Louvain, contrasted the sinful behavior of Luther and Calvin with "our noble illustrious king" (*ar rí uasal óirdheir*), James VI and I, who deserved Irish allegiance and loyalty. Another catechism, by Theobald Stapleton, actively promoted the Stuarts as legitimate rulers of Ireland.[106] Both of these works were written in the Irish vernacular in order to reach as wide an audience as possible. They deliberately eschewed classical Irish (as used by bardic poets), which was allegedly incomprehensible to "*an Tuata bocht simplidh Erenach*" (the simple Irish country folk).[107] Both poems, and the religious texts that could be expounded upon at Mass, deliberately linked the promotion of loyalty to the Stuart monarchy to recognizably Irish and Catholic symbols of authority.

Irish Catholics, both clergy and laity, were not in unanimous agreement on whether loyalty to the Stuart regime could be reconciled with obedience to the papacy. This was also a dilemma for English Catholics, one that was intensified by the international controversy over King James's 1606 Oath of Allegiance, but the problem was inevitably much more acute in Ireland, where a small Protestant elite contended with a predominantly Catholic population. Despite attempts to promote the idea that Irishness, Catholicism, and loyalty to the monarch were not incompatible identities, mutual suspicion between English Protestants and Catholics, whether Irish or English, remained deeply entrenched. Philip O'Sullivan Beare's *Historiae catholicae Iberniae compendium*, published at Lisbon in 1621, expressed hostility to the English Protestant elite, challenged the legitimacy of the heretical Stuart monarchy, and urged his countrymen to support the Habsburg crown.[108] In the 1640s, Conor O'Mahony, a Jesuit who trained in Seville and became professor of dogmatic theology in Lisbon, echoed these sentiments in the *Disputatio apologetica de iure regni Hiberniae pro catholicis Hibernis adversus haereticos Anglos*. He argued that the 1641 rebellion was a just war against heretics and reminded Irish audiences that their loyalty to Charles I could legitimately be withdrawn due to his religious beliefs; thus, he supported the installation of a native monarch as well as the elimination of all heretics from Ireland.[109] O'Mahony's work was ordered to be burned

[105] Lambert McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána: A Miscellany of Irish Bardic Poetry, Historical and Religious, Including the Historical Poems of the Duanaire in the Yellow Book of Lecan* (Dublin, 1939), Poem 44; Brendán Ó Buachalla, *The Crown of Ireland* (Galway, 2006), 30.

[106] Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil, *Scáthán Shacramunite na hAithridhe* (Louvain, 1618); Theobald Stapleton, *Catechismus. Adhon, an Teagasc Criostuí, iar na fhoillsuí à Laidin agus à Ngaoilaig* (Brussels, 1639).

[107] Stapleton, *Catechismus*, introduction; Mac Craith, "'Beathaíonn,'" 102–3.

[108] Hiram Morgan, s.v., "O'Sullivan Beare, Philip," *DIBO*; Oscar Recio Morales, "Irish Émigré Group Strategies of Survival, Adaptation and Integration in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Spain," in *Irish Communities in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons (Dublin, 2006), 240–66, at 255.

[109] Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, s.v., "O'Mahony, Conor," by *DIBO*; idem, "'Though Hereticks and Politicians Should Misinterpret Their Goode Zeal': Political Ideology and Catholicism in Early Modern Ireland," in Ohlmeyer, ed., *Political Thought*, 155–75.

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by the Confederates, but he was by no means the first Catholic cleric to denounce an English monarch as a heretic or to exalt the pope as the supreme authority. In 1609, Sir John Davies lamented that the enlistment of Irish soldiers to fight in Sweden against the Poles was hampered by priests preaching that it was unlawful to fight for a heretic against a lawful Catholic king.[110] In October 1613, Sir Toby Caulfield recorded the testimonies of two native Irishmen who alleged that a friar warned his congregation that parliament aimed "to cosen them & to bring them from their Religion" and instructed them to "take ye Pope to bee their true head."[111] Despite the efforts of a number of high-profile Catholic clergymen to promote loyalty to the Stuart monarchy, there existed a hardline faction within Irish Catholicism that sought to undermine this discourse. Those who favored an accommodation with the Stuarts could point to the de facto tolerance of Catholicism and the "revival" of the Catholic Church in the 1620s and 1630s. This argument did not sit well with those who adhered more rigidly to Catholic doctrine or with those who supported the papal nuncio in the Confederation during the 1640s.[112]

Ireland's ethnic and religious divisions generated competing notions of what constituted the common good. Moreover, disagreements over how to respond to the dominance of the New English spilled out into public view and exposed Ireland's ethnic and religious fissures, as revealed by the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion and the Confederate wars of the 1640s. Stuart authorities failed to make successful appeals for the loyalty of Ireland's various Protestant communities. For a brief moment, Scottish settlers either actively joined the insurrection or remained passive observers of attacks upon English settlers. This has recently been interpreted as clear evidence of "the extent to which the Stuart experiment in political union and archipelagic regime building through colonization had failed."[113] Furthermore, in the early stages of the rising, many of the Irish rebels openly rejected the Stuart monarchy's authority, while others evoked Charles's name to justify their actions. The establishment of the official rebel government in 1642 led to the selection of "Pro Deo, Rege et Patria, Hibernia Unanimes" (Irishmen united for God, King and Country) as its motto—a clear attempt to bind their movement through identification with the Stuart monarchy. Scholars of the Confederation have shown that the competing factions within Irish Catholicism polarized the membership of the Confederate assembly, particularly after Rinuccini's arrival.[114] As political influence within the Confederation swung toward the clerical party, disagreements among its leading figures leaked into public domains, as evidenced by the rejection of the Ormond Peace in 1646. Competing visions of what a postwar Ireland should look

[110] *CSPI, 1608–10*, 300.

[111] Examination of Shane McPhelimy O'Donnelly, 22 October 1613, Cotton MS Titus B X, fols. 241 r–v, BL; *CSPI, 1611–14*, 431; Brian Mac Cuarta, *Catholic Revival in the North of Ireland, 1603–1641* (Dublin, 2007), 79, 85.

[112] Corish, *The Catholic Community*, 1–72; Alan Ford, "'Firm Catholics' or 'Loyal Subjects'? Religious and Political Allegiance in Early Seventeenth-Century Ireland," in *Political Discourse in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. D. G. Boyce, Robert Eccleshall, and Vincent Geoghegan (Basingstoke, 2001), 1–31, at 28–29; Brian Mac Cuarta, *Catholic Revival in the North of Ireland, 1603–41* (Dublin, 2007).

[113] Edwards, "Introduction," 1–4.

[114] Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642–1649: A Constitutional and Political Analysis* (Dublin, 2008), 107; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Reformation*, 124–25.

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like undermined the prospects of a unified Catholic Irish public; however, the presentation of alternative interpretations of the relationship between secular and spiritual authority still exposed Ireland's Catholics to debates about these issues. Those outside the corridors of political power thus engaged critically with rival visions for church and state: divisions that informed the discourses promoted by the political factions that emerged during the 1640s in the Confederate assembly.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic, religious, and linguistic barriers to information exchange not only limited Ireland's assimilation into broader British politics but also facilitated the construction of competing publics that were markedly more polarized than elsewhere in the archipelago. Cultural differences between monoglot Protestant English speakers, who participated fully in the structures and practices of colonial governance, and the Irish-speaking Catholic population, who found themselves increasingly marginalized, reinforced the confessional divide and made participation on equal terms all but impossible. At the same time, the Catholic Church lobbied for a greater political stake for Catholics and played a key role in disseminating a message of loyalty to the Stuart regime. Anglo-Britannic ideas penetrated these Irish and Catholic spaces, thereby creating the context in which wider critical engagement with post-Reformation debates on the nature of authority could occur.

News also flowed to and from the Continent. These wider Catholic news cultures informed political engagement, underlining the transnational nature of Irish news and politics during the seventeenth century. Ireland was not a feudal backwater, isolated from British and continental news networks. Rather, these networks fed ongoing debates about the nature of authority in which Irish speakers, supplementing native traditions with post-Tridentine Catholic ideas, developed a vision of an Irish common interest distinct from that of the ruling Protestant elite. These discourses, circulating more freely in print on the Continent, were brought into Ireland seditiously and secretly by word of mouth. That Irish political news and politics flowed between Dublin, London, and the Continent raises questions about how we can integrate Europe and European news cultures into any study of the highly diverse and varied publics emerging within and across the British archipelago. Lake and Pincus pointed to specific aspects of *comparison* between England and Europe, but I suggest that a more integrative approach may be required, one in which we begin to recognize how different types of public were constructed, in part, through their engagement with different sources of news.

The study of reception history is constrained by the limitations of evidence. What we can determine is that news had a profound impact on local and national Irish politics and that people in Ireland could engage with wider politics in a critical, if sporadic, way. Rumors that the English parliament intended to extirpate Irish Catholics prompted Maguire and his cohorts to take up arms. Similarly, news that the Ormond Peace had been decidedly rejected led to its abandonment and the pursuit of a new agenda within the Irish Confederation during the 1640s. Irish elites sporadically attempted to create a broad base of support for their political initiatives and adapted similar tactics to do so. In this particular respect, Irish publics behaved in a similar fashion to those in England and Wales. Following Bowen, however, I strongly

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challenge the chronologies for the formation of early modern publics that Lake and Pincus postulated for England. The 1640s in Ireland were not a "transitional moment" exemplified by a print explosion. As happened in Wales in the 1640s, Irish elites predominantly relied upon oral and performative forms of communication, rather than print, to communicate with the wider population. The Confederate era exhibited limited growth in the intensification of public debate and little sense that the invocation of public opinion had been made routine. This raises questions not only about the applicability to other polities of chronologies peculiar to England's patterns of socioeconomic and political change but also about the utility of seeking to compare widely differing "national" entities.

Francis Bacon's proposal to consider all inhabitants of Ireland as "one nation" fell upon deaf ears. There was no sustained attempt to create a unified public centered on the Stuart monarchy that might have bridged the religious divide and forged a shared view of what constituted the public good. Instead, and as happened in Wales, different publics emerged in Ireland that articulated competing notions of the commonwealth. At times, cross-denominational efforts worked together to achieve a common goal in the interests of public welfare. For the most part, however, the ambiguous, inconsistent, incompatible, and often antagonistic attitudes that existed among the colonial elites in Ireland toward the full integration of Catholics into the political process facilitated the articulation of an openly hostile oppositional discourse about the legitimacy of Stuart rule. At the same time, the existence of a "firm" Catholic public led to internal critiques of the Catholic hierarchy as it tried to present itself as trustworthy and competent, thereby providing further ammunition for Protestants convinced of Catholic disloyalty.[115]

Distrust between confessional and ethnic groups was reflected in the increasingly confrontational public discourses that prefigured the Irish rebellion. Fundamental divisions within Irish politics on the extent to which Catholics should assert their religious liberties had already emerged by the 1620s and would later crystallize into the two major political factions that would dominate politics during the Confederate era. In such circumstances, rumors of mass extirpations could be deemed credible, thereby contributing significantly to the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion. They also prevented the emergence of a trans-confessional effort to suppress the insurrection in its early stages and to limit the violence. At key moments, such as during the Ormond Peace of 1646, factions attempted to manipulate the opinions of a wider Catholic public and to host political debates, generating a degree of fragmentation and instability within Catholic Irish politics that made unity in the face of Protestant aggression difficult to achieve, with devastating consequences for the future of Catholic Ireland. The depth of the divisions in Irish society had, nonetheless, created a distinctive kind of politics, in which the conflicting narratives adopted by different ethno-religious communities sustained the continuing instability and impermanence of its publics.

[115] Ford, "'Firm Catholics' or 'Loyal Subjects'?"

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